



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

The Episcopal Church Center • 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017
(212) 922-5385 • (800) 334-7626 • FAX (212) 557-5827 • jsolheim@dfms.org / kmccormick@dfms.org

Office of News and Information

James E. Solheim, Director

Kathryn McCormick, Associate Director

PROCESSED

MAR 16 2000

GTU LIBRARY

March 9, 2000

**For immediate release:
CONTENTS**

■	Anglicans continue to sort out implications of consecration in Singapore (2000-049)	1
■	Christian-Muslim violence kills 400 in Nigeria (2000-050)	3
■	Anglicans caught in devastating floods in Mozambique (2000-051)	4
■	Diocese of Atlanta cancels consecration of a bishop at last minute (2000-052)	6
■	Lutherans trying to accommodate opponents of full communion with Episcopalians (2000-053)	7
■	Lutheran and Episcopal seminaries enthusiastic about shared ministry (2000-054)	9
■	National Council of Churches moves forward with sweeping restructure (2000-055)	10
■	Domestic Missionary Partnership seeks to forge community (2000-056)	11
■	Church addresses implications of Lambeth resolution on sexuality (2000-057)	13

■	NEWS DIGEST	15
---	--------------------	-----------

	NEWS BRIEFS (2000-058)	27
--	-------------------------------	-----------

NEWSFEATURES

■	Bishops' spouses build houses, and relationships, in Honduras (2000-059)	33
■	Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes quietly celebrates 15th anniversary (2000-060)	35
■	New York church reopens its slave gallery to stand as a lesson in pain—and hope (2000-061)	38
■	Stewardship leaders share ideas at Florida conference (2000-062)	40

2000-049

Anglicans continue to sort out implications of consecration in Singapore

by James Solheim

(ENS) Anglicans around the world continue to sort out the implications of the consecration of two Americans as "missionary bishops" by the primates of Rwanda and South East Asia.

The January 29 consecration of John Rodgers, Jr. of Pennsylvania and Charles Murphy of South Carolina is meant to help "reestablish the unity that has been violated by the unrebuked ridicule and denial of basic Christian teaching" in the Episcopal Church, according to an initial press release.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold said that he was "appalled by this irregular action and even more so by the purported 'crisis' that has been largely fomented by them and others." Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said in a February 17 statement that the consecrations did not follow the proper procedures and that he "cannot recognize their episcopal ministry until such time as a full rapprochement and reconciliation has taken place between them and the appropriate authorities within the Episcopal Church of the United States." Lambeth Palace later said that the consecrations were "valid but illegal," meaning that Rodgers and Murphy were bishops but lacked legality because of shortcomings in the consecration process.

Archbishop Moses Tay of South East Asia and Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda defended their action in a January 30 letter to Carey. "Far from being an attack on the Communion, this action is an affirmation of the unity of Anglican doctrine and faith which has been frequently and flagrantly violated in the ECUSA." They described the consecrations as a "pastoral step" and an "interim action" that "simply gives pastoral care until faithful doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline has been restored."

Sorry affair?

Reaction has varied widely, and does not split neatly between liberals and conservatives.

The bishops of the Province of Southern Africa issued a statement March 1 saying that they are "deeply shocked" by the consecration, agreeing with Carey that they are "totally irregular and irresponsible. The action taken is thoroughly anarchic and undermines proper order in the Church of God."

The bishops also agreed with comments by Archbishop Michael Peers of Canada that the local church chooses bishops, adding that the consecration "actually makes a mockery of the church's sacrament of episcopal ordination." They recommended that the meeting of the Anglican Communion primates in Portugal in March should condemn the consecrations, declare the bishops out of communion with Canterbury and the other provinces, support the Americans in a search for reconciliation and call for repentance from "those who have erred so grievously."

Peers called the consecrations "a sorry affair" in a column in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. "There simply is no mandate for these ordinations... It was an act designed to divide a church that is prayerfully seeking to grow in unity in the midst of real differences on a variety of issues. These ordinations have nothing to do with the unity in Christ of which a bishop is to be a sign and minister," he said.

Bishop Paul Marshall of Bethlehem sounded a similar note when he said, "To consecrate bishops intending to create a fifth column in a place where the sacraments are already celebrated is to deny directly the nature of the episcopate as a sign of unity and the church as the context in which Holy Orders have meaning." While he agreed that "liberal bishops could be more accommodating to conservative parishes," consecrating "missionary bishops" suggests that there is no church in America.

The new primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, the Most. Rev. Peter Carnley, described the consecration as "wicked" and said that such "vagrant" bishops are irregular and unlawful within Anglicanism.

Nature of episcopacy

But three conservative archbishops from different parts of the world, who "share in a deep concern for Anglican orthodoxy and where it is being eroded, disagreed. "We regret that pressures upon traditionalists within the Episcopal Church in the U.S. should have accumulated to the point at which two primates, whom we hold in esteem, felt compelled to take this present action on their own initiative and contrary to what was agreed in a meeting in which they shared in Kampala," said Archbishops Harry Goodhew of Sydney, Donald Mtemala of Tanzania and Maurice Sinclair of Southern Cone.

Last November they participated in a meeting where conservatives from the American church pleaded for bishops of their own but were given little encouragement. Yet several of the primates held out the possibility that they would take some action before the Portugal meeting of primates.

Bishop James Stanton of Dallas, who participated in the Kampala meeting, agreed with Carey's response as "both reasonable and appropriate" because the archbishop of Canterbury "upholds the traditional understanding of the office of bishop and points out the dangers inherent in bishops acting unilaterally for any cause." He concluded, "We in the West, and in the American church in particular, need to be reminded of the collegial and accountable nature of the episcopate."

Bishop Claude Payne of Texas said that acting independently is not a solution. The consecration does not encourage Christian community but is "a reaction by conservatives who are frustrated by the continued lack of due process in gaining consensus before decisions are made."

Bishop Dorsey Henderson of Upper South Carolina argued that the consecration "strikes at the very heart of Anglicanism, the polity and order of the church" but he agreed with Bishop Ed Salmon of South Carolina that more anger would not help the situation. He hoped that there would be time "for wisdom to be discerned, for a godly solution to be reached. Further disunity and division is to be avoided if at all possible."

Biblical faithfulness

That may not be possible, according to Rodgers. In an interview with the *Living Church*, he said that over the years parishes which found themselves caught in dioceses "departing from biblical teaching and morals" actually considered leaving the denomination. "Every one of these congregations wanted to be part of the Anglican Communion but did not believe that they could remain in the diocese of the Episcopal Church in which they were located, with good conscience," he said.

In a series of pre-Lambeth meetings he talked with church leaders in other provinces "to see what possibilities might lie for their oversight."

When asked what he hoped to accomplish, Rodgers said that “we hope just to draw the attention of the whole Communion to the importance of biblical faithfulness.” And he hopes that the primates “will see in this the depth of the issue. It just simply cannot go on the way it’s been going on—the differences are too profound and deep....” On the touchy issue of respecting diocesan boundaries, he said that where a diocese honors all the resolutions of Lambeth—on the authority of Scripture and human sexuality—“we will be happy to respect the boundary resolution on diocesan structure.”

In an attempt to place the controversy in context, Bishop Rogers Harris said that he has seen the church’s unity “tested sometimes by raging controversies such as whether women can truly worship God without wearing hats. We have been threatened by schism over the civil rights movement, Prayer Book revision, the role of women in the church and much more. In my opinion,” the retired bishop of Southwest Florida asserted, “we have never been more united in the mission of Christ than we are now.” While not glossing over differences of opinion, Harris said that “the way we are handling these differences is constructive and conducive to real unity.”

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church’s Office of News and Information.

2000-050

Christian-Muslim violence kills 400 in Nigeria

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) Although in early March calm seemed to be returning to cities in Nigeria that had been ravaged by riots over the previous three weeks, Nigerian Anglicans were still living with the fear that struck with the eruption of Christian-Muslim violence in the northern part of the country.

“Our people are being shot, butchered and roasted,” Bishop Josiah Fearon of the Diocese of Kaduna reported to a friend. Later, he added, “We need prayers and the intervention of the Lord for people to regain their confidence.”

The violence first flared at a February 21 protest by Christians against Muslim demands for the introduction of Muslim law, known as *sharia*, in Kaduna state. According to some reports, more than 400 people were killed as rioting spread, and hundreds of homes and businesses burned. Within days, the Anglican Communion News Service said, Fearon had been confined to his home with his family and six other bishops. The bishops had gathered in Kaduna to elect a new primate of the Church of Nigeria. (Eventually, the country’s bishops held their synod in another city and elected P.J. Akinola as their primate.)

Fearon said one of the dead in his diocese was the son of a senior priest. The wife of a diocesan evangelist was fighting for her life in a hospital.

At least six Anglican churches were destroyed in fires. An estimated 25,000 Christian and Muslim refugees, among them 1,000 Anglicans, were reported to have fled from the violence.

Rioting ignited again a week later in the southern city of Aba, where local Christian Ibos fought with Hausa-speaking immigrants from Muslim northern Nigeria. Residents said the violence was in response to the killings in the north.

In a separate report, Bishop Benjamin A. Kwashi of Jos, also in the south, said that as the local chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, he met with denominational leaders, tribal chiefs and others, who agreed to try to make Jos safe. They did that, he said, by resorting to prayer, setting up a special week of prayers among Christians in the state from February 28 to March 6.

Religion and ethnicity have long been a source of tension and periodic violence in Nigeria. The adoption of *sharia* by Zamfara state in October triggered a spate of similar decisions and announced intentions in other Nigerian states. Two have already approved legislation under which *sharia* is expected to come into effect in May.

Fearon warned in December of his concern that Nigeria may break up in a religious civil war over the *sharia* issue, according to the *Church of England Newspaper*. Kwashi has also expressed fears of a civil war, the newspaper said.

The violence has uncomfortable parallels with the period before the civil war that began in 1967, when the killing of thousands of Ibos in northern Nigeria and the subsequent flight of tens of thousands more helped trigger the southeast's bid to secede. An estimated 1 million people died before the breakaway state of Biafra was defeated by forces from the rest of Nigeria, Africa's most populous state.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

2000-051

Anglicans caught in devastating floods in Mozambique

by James Solheim

(ENS) Members of Anglican churches are among the nearly one million people affected by the devastating floods in the impoverished south African nation of Mozambique.

"We are devastated and we need help now," Bishop Dinis Sengulane said in a telephone conversation with Jim Rosenthal in the London office of the Anglican Communion. "People have no homes, no food and even no Bibles—everything had to be left behind," the bishop said. "The hospitals are overcrowded with people sleeping on the floors. They are suffering from cholera, meningitis and deadly malaria. It is an awful sight. I have seen it with my own eyes."

In a report to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief in New York, he said that people continue to flee their homes. Several priests are missing and houses and churches are completely under water. The fund sent a \$25,000 emergency grant to the Diocese of Lebombo and additional funds will be sent as they are received and the needs are more clearly identified.

Sengulane also reported that the church's archdeacon is missing from a city where the "new church is under water and the priest has lost everything." One priest reported that 25 people who had lost their homes were crowded into his modest rectory.

While international aid and rescue efforts are finally beginning to relieve some of the pressure, "the loss of life and infrastructure, including roads, will be a tremendous setback for a country that was one of the most successful economic stories of 1999," said the Rev. Willis Logan of the National Council of Churches Africa Office. "The real work will start after the water recedes," he added. "That's when we'll see the full extent of the destruction. Restoration needs will be enormous."

Food was finally reaching people who endured days without any nourishment, often trapped on rooftops or even in trees. Until the roads are rebuilt, however, airlifting food aid will be slow and very expensive.

Britain and the United States are considering proposals that would cancel a portion of the country's crippling foreign debt. One of the poorest nations on earth, Mozambique owes about \$88 million to creditors and another \$30 million to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Bishop Thomas Shaw of Massachusetts, who is serving a Congressional internship, joined Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers, House Banking Committee chairman Jim Leach, and leaders of relief agencies in a call for debt relief.

While churches, relief agencies and governments respond with emergency aid, "It is our hope that Congress will do what it can—go one step further for Mozambique by relieving its international debts," he testified. "Mozambique and a dozen other poor countries will soon qualify for an international plan for debt relief, freeing up millions of dollars for each country to build better schools, provide better health systems, build roads to get goods to markets... or rebuild after flooding that has left a million people homeless. For Mozambique, debt relief means flood relief," he said.

After explaining the biblical concept of Jubilee, which calls on God's people "to allow the land to lie fallow, to set slaves free, to return land to its original owner and to cancel debts," Shaw added, "We must seize this historic opportunity to take moral action, grounded in Scripture and our compassion for those in need. We must seize upon this unique moment, while the rest of the world is poised to act, while there is an immense intentional grassroots movement for debt relief, and during this year 2000—considered a year of Jubilee by many—to make this a reality."

Government officials in Mozambique estimate that it will cost at least \$65 million to reconstruct the flood zone, which lies in the most heavily populated and productive area of the nation. In the meantime, it pays \$1.4 million in interest each week on a debt incurred during the Marxist era of its history, part of its legacy of civil war.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

2000-052

Diocese of Atlanta cancels consecration of a bishop at last minute

by James Solheim

(ENS) The February 25 announcement was short and terse—the consecration of Robert Trache as the ninth bishop of Atlanta, scheduled for March 4, was cancelled.

“The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Atlanta, by unanimous decision, has withdrawn its consent to the consecration,” the statement said. “The withdrawal, made in consultation with the office of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church and the professional advisors associated with the consecration of a bishop, means the consecration will not be ordered.”

The statement cited “very recent discoveries of lack of disclosure in personal financial and family matters. The Standing Committee is no longer confident in Trache’s ability to function as bishop of Atlanta.”

Trache, rector of St. James’ Church in Richmond, Virginia, was elected October 23 by a special council of the diocese on the fifth ballot.

According to news reports, Trache filed for Chapter 7 personal bankruptcy January 20, three months after he was elected, listing his assets at less than \$18,000 and his outstanding debts at more than \$122,000, most of it to credit card companies. The diocese would not clarify what it meant by “family matters” but it was widely rumored that he had marital problems.

“The issues are not so much what has gone on, but how they handled the decisions they made and how they were disclosed to the body of the faithful,” said the Rev. Richard Callaway, chair of the Standing Committee. He told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “Anyone can have marital difficulties, can have financial problems. Those are not the kind of things that disqualify someone.”

Friends and colleagues expressed shock, calling Trache a very effective and dynamic priest. He spearheaded multimillion-dollar building campaigns in the two Virginia parishes he served, including \$10 million to rebuild historic St. James’ which was nearly destroyed by fire a few weeks after he arrived in 1994.

Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia said that he was “very saddened” by the news and told the *Washington Post* that the situation “raises serious questions about the canonical process” of electing bishops. Bishop Clay Matthews, director of the church’s office for pastoral development, said that the examination process includes a 15-year background check into a candidate’s employment, educational, credit and legal history. And he said that a two-part psychiatric exam includes “behavior screening” and “self-assessment life history” questions that might catch personal problems not revealed in the normal background checks.

Lee told the *Washington Post* that Trache remains a priest in good standing in Virginia but he will not return to St. James’ because the parish has already moved ahead with its search for a new rector.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church’s Office of News and Information.

2000-053

Lutherans trying to accommodate opponents of full communion with Episcopalians

by James Solheim

(ENS) Worried that continuing opposition in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to full communion with the Episcopal Church may lead to a split, a small group met in Milwaukee in mid-February and shaped proposals they think would keep the church together—but the church's bishops issued a pastoral letter strongly endorsing the commitment to full communion.

"We believe voting members of the 1999 Churchwide Assembly did not anticipate the depth and extent of opposition that appears to exist," said a Common Ground Resolution passed by 17 of the 18 participants in the closed Milwaukee meeting. The resolution suggests several alternatives, effectively allowing ELCA clergy who are not ordained by a bishop in historic succession as required by CCM, to have equal standing with other clergy. And it also raises the possibility of starting a new synod, the Lutheran version of a diocese, that "may be out of conformity with certain provisions of the full communion agreements."

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly last summer approved Called to Common Mission (CCM), a new version of an earlier Concordat of Agreement that outlined a relationship of full communion between the two churches. The Episcopal Church passed the Concordat at its General Convention in 1997. The Lutherans narrowly defeated the proposal at their own 1997 meeting, but set up a committee to produce a revised draft.

Despite passing CCM by the required two-thirds majority, opposition has continued, centered on a provision that Lutherans adopt the historic episcopate.

The Rev. Joseph Wagner, executive director of the ELCA Division for Ministry, voted against the Milwaukee resolution, saying that it undercuts the action of the Churchwide Assembly and goes too far in trying to accommodate a vocal minority of opponents. ELCA Secretary, the Rev. Lowell Almen, warned that implementing the resolution's proposals "would require substantial constitutional changes." He added that the proposal "appears not to reflect an understanding of either the present polity of the ELCA or of our predecessor church bodies."

Honoring opponents

Bishop Mark Hanson of St. Paul, an advocate of CCM, said that those who are in favor of full communion "will say we tipped too close to those opposed" but others will see that opponents have been heard. But he said that it would be "very difficult" to satisfy those opposed to the historic episcopate and not undermine the whole CCM.

"I hope the outcome of the Milwaukee conversations might help ELCA leaders find a way both to honor our church's adoption of CCM and to enable those opposed to remain in the fold," said the Rev. Michael Cooper-White, director of the ELCA's department for synodical relations and assistant to Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson. Because the meeting was unofficial, Cooper-White thought it was not appropriate to call the suggestions a resolution.

The Rev. Brad Jenson of Duluth, a strong opponent of CCM, said that the meeting "actually exceeded my expectations" and that he was pleased with the suggestions in the resolution. He said that he was one of those who would leave the ELCA if the historic episcopate were required of all future clergy.

Bishop Rick Foss of North Dakota, also strongly opposed to CCM, said at a recent meeting of opponents, "Something's got to change or our church will be in a mess." He raised the possibility of "non-compliance," although he wasn't sure how it would work in his synod.

In a note to his colleagues in New England, the Rev. Richard Koenig of Massachusetts said that the attempt at a "compromise" ends up confronting the ELCA with "a crisis of major proportions." He warned, "We could either see agreement with the Episcopalians undercut and nullified or undergo some sort of schism."

Bishop Chris Epting of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa, a member of the team that drafted CCM, attended the Milwaukee meeting briefly to listen to the concerns, realizing that some of the proposals being considered could be problematic for Episcopalians.

Dismantling of ELCA?

Prof. Michael Root of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Ohio, a Lutheran member of the team that produced CCM, said in an open letter distributed widely in the church that the proposals are "inherently misleading and would both undermine the constitution of the ELCA and destroy our ecumenical relations with the Episcopal Church." He said that "it is of utmost importance that they be rejected immediately."

What well-organized opposition was not able to achieve in derailing CCM "they are now seeking to achieve by clandestine maneuvers," Root charged. The resolution opens the possibility that "every ordinand and bishop-elect could specify whether or not they will be ordained or installed by the rites approved by this church as a part of our ecumenical commitments." And giving ordinands the choice whether the bishop presides at ordination would abandon the essential notion that it is the church's ordination, he said.

Non-geographical synods would result in calls for other such synods, ones that would take differing stands on the ordination of gays and lesbians, or the ordination of women. "Once we start down that road where do we stop? Are we a church or a federation of theologically defined interest groups?" he asked. If opponents cannot live with CCM and the decision of the church the time may come for an "amicable parting of the ways." The letter concluded, "What should not be permitted is the implicit dismantling of the ELCA."

Bishops call for more dialogue

The ELCA's Conference of Bishops, at a meeting in Florida shortly after the Milwaukee meeting, hammered out a pastoral letter acknowledging the continuing opposition to CCM but calling the decision to move forward with full communion "a promising step that strengthens the mission of Christ's church."

"I hope it is received as a strong commitment to the CCM and it says to [opponents] that we are inviting continued conversation within the church and with the Episcopal Church," said Bishop Mark Hanson of St. Paul.

"We recognize that persons of integrity and conscience find themselves in disagreement with one another on various issues, notably over policies and practices related to ordination," the letter said. "We trust that God's reconciling power will continue to guide the conversations among supporters and opponents in this matter."

“As we gradually live into a relationship of full communion, we invite the exploration of possible ways to allow a synodical bishop, in unusual circumstances and with appropriate consultation, to authorize another ELCA pastor to preside at an ordination. We ask the ELCA Church Council, in consultation with the presiding bishop of this church, to pursue this exploration as part of our continued broad consultation in this church and with the Episcopal Church.”

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

2000-054

Lutheran and Episcopal seminaries enthusiastic about shared ministry

by Bruce Parker

(ENS) More than 100 Episcopalian and Lutheran participants gathered on February 29 and March 1 at The General Theological Seminary in New York City for a major conference on the future shape of shared ministry in an urban setting. Sponsored by GTS and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, “Common Mission in the City” drew sizable numbers of seminarians and professors from both schools, along with the administrative leaders of both institutions.

The conference began with the Holy Eucharist on the evening of February 29 at which Bishop Steven Bouman of the Lutheran New York Metropolitan Synod was the preacher. Following dinner, the conference formally opened with a lecture by the Rev. Philip D.W. Krey, president of the Lutheran seminary.

The following day participants heard from a variety of noted congregational clergy and from faculty members from both seminaries. Afternoon workshops were held on subjects including Liturgy and Spirituality, Social Witness, and Diaconal ministries.

New lessons

“We need to get on with common mission,” said Krey in his opening address, “because God has placed a whole new set of issues before us.... We need to be ready for the new lessons that full communion, shared ministry, and common mission will bring.” With success stories of cooperative ministries from the Rocky Mountains to Philadelphia illustrating his remarks, Krey insisted that churches with a state church heritage—which both the Episcopal and Lutheran churches share—are also called to urban mission because they expect and insist that municipal, state, and federal structures provide services to their constituents.

“Many Lutheran and Episcopal churches have remained in our depressed urban communities after other mainline churches have left,” he said.

While being careful not to minimize the importance of theological discussion, Krey said he believes U.S. culture is experiencing a religious revival and that the opportunity for the increased evangelism offered by common mission with theological depth must not be missed. Exciting and productive forms of cooperative ministries are going on right now, he asserted, and they must continue and grow.

Historic celebration

Following presentations by Archdeacon Michael Kendall of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, and the Rev. Dr. Pamela Cooper-White, an LTSP professor, participants gathered in the seminary's chapel, which was filled almost to capacity for a historic celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Krey was the celebrant and Mark Sisk, bishop coadjutor of New York, was the preacher. The liturgy symbolized the seminaries' growing cooperation, marking the first time the Lutheran Book of Worship had been used in the Episcopal chapel's 112-year history. "The enthusiasm for shared ministry between our churches has been strongly present throughout this conference," said General's dean, the Very Rev. Ward B. Ewing. "We hope events like this will help to generate similar enthusiasm throughout our churches."

In 1998, General signed a seminary covenant with LTSP, which committed the schools to jointly plan academic and social justice programs.

Plans for a joint Hispanic ministry between the seminaries are currently underway.

--Bruce Parker is director of communications for The General Theological Seminary.

2000-055

National Council of Churches moves forward with sweeping restructure

by James Solheim

(ENS) Moving forward after celebrating its 50th anniversary and choosing new leadership, the Executive Board of the National Council of Churches adopted at a meeting in early March a realistic plan it hopes will take the ecumenical agency into a more certain future.

"There is reason to be encouraged about the future," said the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America in presenting the final report of the Transition Management Team charged with developing a realistic structure and staffing plan. "At this juncture we believe the organizational life of the council is becoming stabilized and well ordered."

"We have stopped the financial hemorrhaging," asserted the Rev. Robert Edgar, the new general secretary of the NCC. "There's a new wind blowing through the NCC."

The council's staff and officers have adopted a series of steps in the wake of a threatening \$4 million deficit at the end of last year, putting in place financial accountability and controls that they trust will avoid a deficit this year and also address the depleted financial reserves.

"We can't have another year when expenditures exceed income," said Belle Miller McMaster of Georgia, representing the Presbyterian Church (USA). "I believe the year 2000, under Bob Edgar's leadership, is a new beginning and a great hope. It's also a very vulnerable year," she added. "We must build back the reserves. The new general secretary can't rebuild the NCC unless we get our financial house in order."

Mission priorities

The board approved priorities for work in four program areas: education, justice, public witness and unity. "We are trying to focus on some achievable goals as we work to rebuild the NCC's finances," Edgar said. He encouraged the board to consider the priorities in light of their impact on children. "When we work against gun violence, let's emphasize how it impacts children," offering a similar approach for the issues of AIDS in Africa and hunger.

The education priority will seek to strengthen families, develop congregational leaders, fight racism, foster spiritual formation, and support quality public education.

The priority on justice will work towards the elimination of racial violence, the eradication of poverty, and the improvement of health, quality of life and survival of the planet.

Included under the public witness priority are efforts to work for passage of legislation dealing with hunger, living wage, gun violence, AIDS in Africa and the Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign.

The NCC will continue its efforts to seek the visible unity of the churches, nurturing and strengthening ecumenical networks, as well as studying and implementing the work of its task force on ecclesiology and one on interfaith relations.

The board endorsed efforts to remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina capitol and resolved not to meet in any Adam's Mark hotel, pending resolution of a Justice Department suit against the hotel chain, alleging a pattern of racial discrimination. The board cited action by the Episcopal Church in a decision to cancel use of the Adam's Mark Hotel in Denver as its headquarters for July's General Convention.

Ginger Paul of Louisiana, who represents the Episcopal Church on the board, said she was encouraged by the meeting, especially its openness in dealing with the future of the NCC. "The Transition Team did a good job," she said in an interview, and "it is clear that they are ready to move forward with dynamic new leaders."

She said that Edgar made it clear that he expected the board to take responsibility for policy and to hold the staff responsible for carrying out that policy.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

2000-056

Domestic Missionary Partnership seeks to forge community

by Dick Snyder

(ENS) The foundation and form and future of missionary spirituality in the Episcopal Church were explored at the annual meeting of Domestic Missionary Partnership (DMP) February 3-6 in Burlingame, California.

"Building a missionary spirituality can be a gift to the larger church," said Rustin Kimsey, bishop of Eastern Oregon and president of DMP, which comprises 10 dioceses.

"We help small, isolated dioceses feel that they are not so isolated and alone," he said. "We provide a communion for those dioceses to come together, and to enjoy one another and to build on our friendships."

Participants listened to an overview of mission and of authority in the church presented by the Rev. John Kater, professor of ministry development at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

“Unfortunately, many times in the church’s history, faith is presented as part of a package, part of a ‘whole’ which very often arrived as part of a colonial or imperial package. Christian faith simply provided the religious underpinning,” Kater said. “In that kind of missionary strategy, context is irrelevant.”

Kater argued that context—utilizing conversation and interaction with those involved in the missionary strategy—is essential. He said that prior to the last Lambeth Conference, “the Anglican Communion never tried to realize what diversity means for us. Lambeth permanently changed the Anglican Communion. We will never be able to ignore context again. “The best kind of evangelism is where we learn from our past, our mistakes, and where people make of themselves open, inviting communities,” he added.

Total ministry

Bishop Steven Plummer of Navajoland agreed with Kater’s presentation about missionary efforts having been made in a colonial or imperial package.

“In the Navajo experience, missionaries came from the government,” Plummer said. Those missionaries discouraged use of the Navajo language, ordered children to cut their hair, and tried to make them dress and look “like Anglos,” he said.

“You have to be the victim of that kind of experience to understand,” he noted. “We now wrestle with how to forgive those who harmed our ancestors. We have to forgive each other and move forward.”

Many of the member dioceses of DMP have embraced the concept of total ministry, also known as mutual ministry or collaborative ministry in which, the ministry of all the baptized is recognized and affirmed.

Kater praised the role of total ministry in “claiming the fact that the authority of the community belongs to the community. Ultimately, authority in the church is Christ’s, and that is shared with the whole community.”

Gospel-Based Discipleship

A practical missionary application was presented to the participants by the Rev. John Robertson, interim national staff officer for Native American ministry. He spoke about Gospel-based Discipleship (GBD), a practice he described as being borrowed from the Maori, native people in New Zealand.

He explained that each day, participants—lay and ordained—join together to read and reflect on the Gospel, and then share what the Gospel is saying to them. And then they share what the Gospel is calling them to do.

Robertson said that GBD “is not meant to be a program; it’s a people-to-people thing. It is not the messenger who is important. It is the message. It’s not Bible study; it is Gospel engagement.” Where it is in use, it is “re-bubbling-up leadership. What happens is that people begin to emerge as leaders. After consistent use, it turns to amazement and transformation, and then to empowerment of their people,” he said.

GBD is in daily use at the diocesan office of the Diocese of Alaska, explained Mary Parsons. It was instituted there by the diocesan bishop, Mark MacDonald.

“I have found my own prayer time to be more frequent, and better quality,” she said. She added that GBD can be used “across denominations and cultures.”

Robertson concluded that “through determining what the Gospel is saying to us today... that gives us a basis for missionary strategy.”

Kater praised the concept of GBD. "It is a way of inviting the community to reflect on the community's book. It's a way of listening to each other, a way of communion. And it helps to hear things that we might not hear for ourselves," he concluded.

Bishop Vernon Strickland of Western Kansas, president-elect of the DMP, agreed the meeting was helpful. "This meeting is lifeblood for us in Western Kansas. We have more in common with the people here than with any other group in the church."

He added that he felt invigorated by the meeting. "I am not interested in 'maintaining,'" he said. "I am interested in mission."

Bishop Keith Whitmore of Eau Claire, who was attending his first DMP meeting, said, "It was wonderful. After three quarters of a year, sort of wandering around in the new office of bishop, it's nice to leave here with some sense of direction and connection."

DMP member dioceses are Utah, Idaho, Eastern Oregon, Western Kansas, Navajoland, North Dakota, Alaska, Nevada, El Camino Real and Eau Claire.

--Dick Snyder is a freelance writer who lives in Nevada.

2000-057

Church addresses implications of Lambeth resolution on sexuality

by James Solheim

(ENS) Dioceses of the Anglican Communion continue to address the implications of a resolution, passed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops, that declared homosexual activity "contrary to Scripture" and advised against the ordination of openly gay and lesbian clergy or the blessing of same-sex relationships.

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney in Australia passed a motion at its February meeting that asks the primates of the Anglican Communion at their meeting in Portugal to "take note of the recent consecrations of the Rt. Reverends John L. Rodgers and Chuck Murphy as an expression of the extreme frustration of orthodox and faithful Anglicans in ECUSA and in the worldwide Communion...."

The resolution affirmed the church's traditional theology on the "uniqueness of Jesus" and the "sufficiency and authority of Scripture," calling for a rejection of "heterosexual immorality and homosexual practice"

A special March 5 convention of the Diocese of Colorado, on the other hand, refused to curb its clergy who bless same-sex unions or call on the church to stop ordaining open gay and lesbian clergy. By a show of hands, delegates declined to endorse the resolutions passed by an overwhelming majority at Lambeth, leading some to warn that Episcopalians in this country were increasingly out of step with Anglicans in other parts of the world.

The special convention was scheduled at the end of a six-month study period during which congregations were urged to study the issues. The diocese postponed action on two resolutions endorsing the Lambeth position at its annual convention last October.

Other dioceses have also wrestled with the Lambeth issues:

- A Diocese of California task force concluded, “We find that living out the Gospel imperative to love God and one another precludes the rejection of homosexuality, homosexuals or homosexual practices. We affirm God’s call to include and accept all people as children of God.”
- The Diocese of Minnesota cited the baptismal covenant and said that this is “a particularly appropriate time to include, welcome and embrace its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members and explicitly declare that in our diocese we continue to make available to them all of the sacraments and blessings of God’s beloved church.”
- The Diocese of Maryland defeated a resolution that would have asked the church’s Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to provide a liturgical rite for blessing committed same-sex relationships.
- The Dioceses of South Carolina and Ft. Worth said that they “will be guided by the moral authority of the 1998 Lambeth Conference...”
- The Diocese of Los Angeles affirmed its policy and practice of not restricting membership or ordination “on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age.”

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church’s Office of News and Information.



news digest

2000-049D

Anglicans continue to sort out implications of consecration in Singapore

(ENS) Anglicans around the world continue to sort out the implications of the consecration of two Americans as “missionary bishops” by the primates of Rwanda and South East Asia.

The January 29 consecration of John Rodgers, Jr. of Pennsylvania and Charles Murphy of South Carolina is meant to help “reestablish the unity that has been violated by the unrebuked ridicule and denial of basic Christian teaching” in the Episcopal Church, according to an initial press release.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold said that he was “appalled by this irregular action and even more so by the purported ‘crisis’ that has been largely fomented by them and others.” Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said in a February 17 statement that the consecrations did not follow the proper procedures and that he “cannot recognize their episcopal ministry until such time as a full rapprochement and reconciliation has taken place between them and the appropriate authorities within the Episcopal Church of the United States.” Lambeth Palace later said that the consecrations were “valid but illegal,” meaning that Rodgers and Murphy were bishops but lacked legality because of shortcomings in the consecration process.

Archbishop Moses Tay of South East Asia and Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda defended their action in a January 30 letter to Carey. “Far from being an attack on the Communion, this action is an affirmation of the unity of Anglican doctrine and faith which has been frequently and flagrantly violated in the ECUSA.” They described the consecrations as a “pastoral step” and an “interim action” that “simply gives pastoral care until faithful doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline has been restored.”

Among the reactions:

- The bishops of the Province of Southern Africa issued a statement March 1 saying that they are “deeply shocked” by the consecration, agreeing with Carey that they are “totally irregular and irresponsible. The action taken is thoroughly anarchic and undermines proper order in the Church of God.”

- Archbishop Michael Peers of Canada called the consecrations “a sorry affair” in a column in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. “There simply is no mandate for these ordinations... It was an act designed to divide a church that is prayerfully seeking to grow in unity in the midst of real differences on a variety of issues. These ordinations have nothing to do with the unity in Christ of which a bishop is to be a sign and minister,” he said.
- Bishop Paul Marshall of Bethlehem sounded a similar note when he said, “To consecrate bishops intending to create a fifth column in a place where the sacraments are already celebrated is to deny directly the nature of the episcopate as a sign of unity and the church as the context in which Holy Orders have meaning.” While he agreed that “liberal bishops could be more accommodating to conservative parishes,” consecrating “missionary bishops” suggests that there is no church in America.
- The new primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, the Most. Rev. Peter Carnley, described the consecration as “wicked” and said that such “vagrant” bishops are irregular and unlawful within Anglicanism.
- Bishop Claude Payne of Texas said that acting independently is not a solution. The consecration does not encourage Christian community but is “a reaction by conservatives who are frustrated by the continued lack of due process in gaining consensus before decisions are made.”
- Bishop Dorsey Henderson of Upper South Carolina argued that the consecration “strikes at the very heart of Anglicanism, the polity and order of the church” but he agreed with Bishop Ed Salmon of South Carolina that more anger would not help the situation. He hoped that there would be time “for wisdom to be discerned, for a godly solution to be reached. Further disunity and division is to be avoided if at all possible.”

But three conservative archbishops from different parts of the world, who “share in a deep concern for Anglican orthodoxy and where it is being eroded,” disagreed. “We regret that pressures upon traditionalists within the Episcopal Church in the U.S. should have accumulated to the point at which two primates, whom we hold in esteem, felt compelled to take this present action on their own initiative...” said Archbishops Harry Goodhew of Sydney, Donald Mtetemala of Tanzania and Maurice Sinclair of Southern Cone.

In an interview with the *Living Church*, Rodgers said that over the years parishes which found themselves caught in dioceses “departing from biblical teaching and morals” actually considered leaving the denomination. “Every one of these congregations wanted to be part of the Anglican Communion but did not believe that they could remain in the diocese of the Episcopal Church in which they were located, with good conscience,” he said.

In a series of pre-Lambeth meetings he talked with church leaders in other provinces “to see what possibilities might lie for their oversight.”

When asked what he hoped to accomplish, Rodgers said that “we hope just to draw the attention to the whole Communion to the importance of biblical faithfulness.” And he hopes that the primates “will see in this the depth of the issue. It just simply cannot go on the way it’s been going on—the differences are too profound and deep....” On the touchy issue of respecting diocesan boundaries, he said that where a diocese honors all the resolutions of Lambeth—on the authority of Scripture and human sexuality—“we will be happy to respect the boundary resolution on diocesan structure.”--**James Solheim**

2000-050D

Christian-Muslim violence kills 400 in Nigeria

(ENS) Although in early March calm seemed to be returning to cities in Nigeria that had been ravaged by riots over the previous three weeks, Nigerian Anglicans were still living with the fear that struck with the eruption of Christian-Muslim violence in the northern part of the country.

“Our people are being shot, butchered and roasted,” Bishop Josiah Fearon of the Diocese of Kaduna reported to a friend. Later, he added, “We need prayers and the intervention of the Lord for people to regain their confidence.”

The violence first flared at a February 21 protest by Christians against Muslim demands for the introduction of Muslim law, known as *sharia*, in Kaduna state. According to some reports, more than 400 people were killed as rioting spread, and hundreds of homes and businesses burned. Within days, the Anglican Communion News Service said, Fearon had been confined to his home with his family and six other bishops. The bishops had gathered in Kaduna to elect a new primate of the Church of Nigeria. (Eventually, the country’s bishops held their synod in another city and elected P.J. Akinola as their primate.)

At least six Anglican churches were destroyed in fires. An estimated 25,000 Christian and Muslim refugees, among them 1,000 Anglicans, were reported to have fled from the violence.

Rioting ignited again a week later in the southern city of Aba, where local Christian Ibos fought with Hausa-speaking immigrants from Muslim northern Nigeria. Residents said the violence was in response to the killings in the north.

Religion and ethnicity have long been a source of tension and periodic violence in Nigeria. The adoption of *sharia* by Zamfara state in October triggered a spate of similar decisions and announced intentions in other Nigerian states. Two have already approved legislation under which *sharia* is expected to come into effect in May.

The violence has uncomfortable parallels with the period before the civil war that began in 1967, when the killing of thousands of Ibos in northern Nigeria and the subsequent flight of tens of thousands more helped trigger the southeast’s bid to secede. An estimated 1 million people died before the breakaway state of Biafra was defeated by forces from the rest of Nigeria, Africa’s most populous state.—**Kathryn McCormick**

2000-051D

Anglicans caught in devastating floods in Mozambique

(ENS) Members of Anglican churches are among the nearly one million people affected by the devastating floods in the impoverished south African nation of Mozambique.

“We are devastated and we need help now,” Bishop Dinis Sengulane said in a telephone conversation with Jim Rosenthal in the London office of the Anglican Communion. “People have no homes, no food and even no Bibles—everything had to be left

behind," the bishop said. "The hospitals are overcrowded with people sleeping on the floors. They are suffering from cholera, meningitis and deadly malaria. It is an awful sight. I have seen it with my own eyes."

In a report to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief in New York, he said that people continue to flee their homes. Several priests are missing and houses and churches are completely under water. The fund sent a \$25,000 emergency grant to the Diocese of Lebombo and additional funds will be sent as they are received and the needs are more clearly identified.

Sengulane also reported that the church's archdeacon is missing from a city where the "new church is under water and the priest has lost everything." One priest reported that 25 people who had lost their homes were crowded into his modest rectory.

While international aid and rescue efforts are finally beginning to relieve some of the pressure, "the loss of life and infrastructure, including roads, will be a tremendous setback for a country that was one of the most successful economic stories of 1999," said the Rev. Willis Logan of the National Council of Churches Africa Office. "The real work will start after the water recedes," he added. "That's when we'll see the full extent of the destruction. Restoration needs will be enormous."

Food was finally reaching people who endured days without any nourishment, often trapped on rooftops or even in trees. Until the roads are rebuilt, however, airlifting food aid will be slow and very expensive.

Britain and the United States are considering proposals that would cancel a portion of the country's crippling foreign debt. One of the poorest nations on earth, Mozambique owes about \$88 million to creditors and another \$30 million to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Bishop Thomas Shaw of Massachusetts, who is serving a Congressional internship, joined Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers, House Banking Committee chairman Jim Leach, and leaders of relief agencies in a call for debt relief.

While churches, relief agencies and governments respond with emergency aid, "It is our hope that Congress will do what it can—go one step further for Mozambique by relieving its international debts," he testified. "Mozambique and a dozen other poor countries will soon qualify for an international plan for debt relief, freeing up millions of dollars for each country to build better schools, provide better health systems, build roads to get goods to markets... or rebuild after flooding that has left a million people homeless. For Mozambique, debt relief means flood relief," he said.

Government officials in Mozambique estimate that it will cost at least \$65 million to reconstruct the flood zone, which lies in the most heavily populated and productive area of the nation. In the meantime, it pays \$1.4 million in interest each week on a debt incurred during the Marxist era of its history, part of its legacy of civil war. —by James Solheim

2000-052D

Diocese of Atlanta cancels consecration of a bishop at last minute

(ENS) The February 25 announcement was short and terse—the consecration of Robert Trache as the ninth bishop of Atlanta, scheduled for March 4, was cancelled.

“The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Atlanta, by unanimous decision, has withdrawn its consent to the consecration,” the statement said. “The withdrawal, made in consultation with the office of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church and the professional advisors associated with the consecration of a bishop, means the consecration will not be ordered.”

The statement cited “very recent discoveries of lack of disclosure in personal financial and family matters. The Standing Committee is no longer confident in Trache’s ability to function as bishop of Atlanta.”

Trache, rector of St. James’ Church in Richmond, Virginia, was elected October 23 by a special council of the diocese on the fifth ballot.

According to news reports, Trache filed for Chapter 7 personal bankruptcy January 20, three months after he was elected, listing his assets at less than \$18,000 and his outstanding debts at more than \$122,000, most of it to credit card companies. The diocese would not clarify what it meant by “family matters” but it was widely rumored that he had marital problems.

“The issues are not so much what has gone on, but how they handled the decisions they made and how they were disclosed to the body of the faithful,” said the Rev. Richard Callaway, chair of the Standing Committee. He told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “Anyone can have marital difficulties, can have financial problems. Those are not the kind of things that disqualify someone.”

Friends and colleagues expressed shock, calling Trache a very effective and dynamic priest. He spearheaded multimillion-dollar building campaigns in the two Virginia parishes he served, including \$10 million to rebuild historic St. James’ which was nearly destroyed by fire a few weeks after he arrived in 1994.-- **James Solheim**

2000-053D

Lutherans trying to accommodate opponents of full communion with Episcopalians

(ENS) Worried that continuing opposition in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to full communion with the Episcopal Church may lead to a split, a small group met in Milwaukee in mid-February and shaped some proposals that they hope will keep the church together—but the church’s bishops stood behind the commitment to full communion in a pastoral letter to the church.

“We believe voting members of the 1999 Churchwide Assembly did not anticipate the depth and extent of opposition that appears to exist,” said a Common Ground Resolution passed by 17 of the 18 participants in the closed Milwaukee meeting that has no official

standing. The resolution suggests several alternatives, effectively allowing ELCA clergy who are not ordained by a bishop in historic succession as required by CCM, to have equal standing with other clergy. And it also raises the possibility of starting a new synod, the Lutheran version of a diocese, that “may be out of conformity with certain provisions of the full communion agreements.”

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly last summer approved Called to Common Mission (CCM), a new version of an earlier Concordat of Agreement that outlined a relationship of full communion between the two churches. The Episcopal Church passed the Concordat at its General Convention in 1997. The Lutherans narrowly defeated the proposal at their own 1997 meeting, but set up a committee to produce a revised draft.

Despite passing CCM by the required two-thirds majority, opposition has continued, centered on a provision that Lutherans adopt the historic episcopate.

The Rev. Joseph Wagner, executive director of the ELCA Division for Ministry, voted against the Milwaukee resolution, saying that it undercuts the action of the Churchwide Assembly and goes too far in trying to accommodate a vocal minority of opponents. ELCA Secretary, the Rev. Lowell Almen, warned that implementing the resolution’s proposals “would require substantial constitutional changes.” He added that the proposal “appears not to reflect an understanding of either the present polity of the ELCA or of our predecessor church bodies.”

Others expressed serious reservations about the proposals. In a note to his colleagues in New England, the Rev. Richard Koenig of Massachusetts said that the attempt at a “compromise” ends up confronting the ELCA with “a crisis of major proportions.” He warned, “We could either see agreement with the Episcopalians undercut and nullified or undergo some sort of schism.”

Prof. Michael Root of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Ohio, a Lutheran member of the team that produced CCM, said in an open letter distributed widely in the church that the proposals are “inherently misleading and would both undermine the constitution of the ELCA and destroy our ecumenical relations with the Episcopal Church.” He said that “it is of utmost importance that they be rejected immediately.”

What well-organized opposition was not able to achieve in derailing CCM “they are now seeking to achieve by clandestine maneuvers,” Root charged. The resolution opens the possibility that “every ordinand and bishop-elect could specify whether or not they will be ordained or installed by the rites approved by this church as a part of our ecumenical commitments.” And giving ordinands the choice whether the bishop presides at ordination would abandon the essential notion that it is the church’s ordination, he said.

The ELCA’s Conference of Bishops, at a meeting in Florida shortly after the Milwaukee meeting, hammered out a pastoral letter acknowledging the continuing opposition to CCM but calling the decision to move forward with full communion “a promising step that strengthens the mission of Christ’s church.”

“I hope it is received as a strong commitment to the CCM and it says to [opponents] that we are inviting continued conversation within the church and with the Episcopal Church,” said Bishop Mark Hanson of St. Paul.

“We recognize that persons of integrity and conscience find themselves in disagreement with one another on various issues, notably over policies and practices related to ordination,” the letter said. “We trust that God’s reconciling power will continue to guide the conversations among supporters and opponents in this matter.”

“As we gradually live into a relationship of full communion, we invite the exploration of possible ways to allow a synodical bishop, in unusual circumstances and with appropriate consultation, to authorize another ELCA pastor to preside at an ordination. We ask the ELCA Church Council, in consultation with the presiding bishop of this church, to pursue this exploration as part of our continued broad consultation in this church and with the Episcopal Church.”--by **James Solheim**

2000-054D

Lutheran and Episcopal seminaries enthusiastic about shared ministry

(ENS) More than 100 Episcopalian and Lutheran participants gathered on February 29 and March 1 at The General Theological Seminary in New York City for a major conference on the future shape of shared ministry in an urban setting. Sponsored by GTS and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, “Common Mission in the City” drew sizable numbers of seminarians and professors from both schools, along with the administrative leaders of both institutions.

The conference began with the Holy Eucharist on the evening of February 29 at which Bishop Steven Bouman of the Lutheran New York Metropolitan Synod was the preacher. Following dinner, the conference formally opened with a lecture by the Rev. Philip D.W. Krey, president of the Lutheran seminary.

The following day participants heard from a variety of noted congregational clergy and from faculty members from both seminaries. Afternoon workshops were held on subjects including Liturgy and Spirituality, Social Witness, and Diaconal ministries.

“We need to get on with common mission,” said Krey in his opening address, “because God has placed a whole new set of issues before us.... We need to be ready for the new lessons that full communion, shared ministry, and common mission will bring.” With success stories of cooperative ministries from the Rocky Mountains to Philadelphia illustrating his remarks, Krey insisted that churches with a state church heritage—which both the Episcopal and Lutheran churches share—are also called to urban mission because they expect and insist that municipal, state, and federal structures provide services to their constituents.

“Many Lutheran and Episcopal churches have remained in our depressed urban communities after other mainline churches have left,” he said.

While being careful not to minimize the importance of theological discussion, Krey said he believes U.S. culture is experiencing a religious revival and that the opportunity for the increased evangelism offered by common mission with theological depth must not be missed. Exciting and productive forms of cooperative ministries are going on right now, he asserted, and they must continue and grow.

Krey was the celebrant and Mark Sisk, bishop coadjutor of New York, was the preacher. The liturgy symbolized the seminaries' growing cooperation, marking the first time the Lutheran Book of Worship had been used in the Episcopal chapel's 112-year history. "The enthusiasm for shared ministry between our churches has been strongly present throughout this conference," said General's dean, the Very Rev. Ward B. Ewing. "We hope events like this will help to generate similar enthusiasm throughout our churches." --**Bruce Parker**

2000-055D

National Council of Churches moves forward with sweeping restructure

(ENS) Moving forward after celebrating its 50th anniversary and choosing new leadership, the Executive Board of the National Council of Churches adopted at a meeting in early March a realistic plan it hopes will take the ecumenical agency into a more certain future.

"There is reason to be encouraged about the future," said the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America in presenting the final report of the Transition Management Team charged with developing a realistic structure and staffing plan. "At this juncture we believe the organizational life of the council is becoming stabilized and well ordered."

"We have stopped the financial hemorrhaging," asserted the Rev. Robert Edgar, the new general secretary of the NCC. "There's a new wind blowing through the NCC."

The council's staff and officers have adopted a series of steps in the wake of a threatening \$4 million deficit at the end of last year, putting in place financial accountability and controls that they trust will avoid a deficit this year and also address the depleted financial reserves.

"We can't have another year when expenditures exceed income," said Belle Miller McMaster of Georgia, representing the Presbyterian Church (USA). "I believe the year 2000, under Bob Edgar's leadership, is a new beginning and a great hope. It's also a very vulnerable year," she added. "We must build back the reserves. The new general secretary can't rebuild the NCC unless we get our financial house in order."

The board approved priorities for work in four program areas: education, justice, public witness and unity. "We are trying to focus on some achievable goals as we work to rebuild the NCC's finances," Edgar said. He encouraged the board to consider the priorities in light of their impact on children. "When we work against gun violence, let's emphasize how it impacts children," offering a similar approach for the issues of AIDS in Africa and hunger.

The education priority will seek to strengthen families, develop congregational leaders, fight racism, foster spiritual formation, and support quality public education.

The priority on justice will work towards the elimination of racial violence, the eradication of poverty, and the improvement of health, quality of life and survival of the planet.

Included under the public witness priority are efforts to work for passage of legislation dealing with hunger, living wage, gun violence, AIDS in Africa and the Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign.

The NCC will continue its efforts to seek the visible unity of the churches, nurturing and strengthening ecumenical networks, as well as studying and implementing the work of its task force on ecclesiology and one on interfaith relations.

Ginger Paul of Louisiana, who represents the Episcopal Church on the board, said she was encouraged by the meeting, especially its openness in dealing with the future of the NCC. "The Transition Team did a good job," she said in an interview, and "it is clear that they are ready to move forward with dynamic new leaders."

She said that Edgar made it clear that he expected the board to take responsibility for policy and to hold the staff responsible for carrying out that policy. --by James Solheim

2000-056D

Domestic Missionary Partnership seeks to forge community

(ENS) The foundation and form and future of missionary spirituality in the Episcopal Church were explored at the annual meeting of Domestic Missionary Partnership (DMP) February 3-6 in Burlingame, California.

"Building a missionary spirituality can be a gift to the larger church," said Rustin Kimsey, bishop of Eastern Oregon and president of DMP, which comprises 10 dioceses.

"We help small, isolated dioceses feel that they are not so isolated and alone," he said. "We provide a communion for those dioceses to come together, and to enjoy one another and to build on our friendships."

Participants listened to an overview of mission and of authority in the church presented by the Rev. John Kater, professor of ministry development at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

"Unfortunately, many times in the church's history, faith is presented as part of a package, part of a 'whole' which very often arrived as part of a colonial or imperial package. Christian faith simply provided the religious underpinning," Kater said. "In that kind of missionary strategy, context is irrelevant."

Kater argued that context—utilizing conversation and interaction with those involved in the missionary strategy—is essential. He said that prior to the last Lambeth Conference, "the Anglican Communion never tried to realize what diversity means for us. Lambeth permanently changed the Anglican Communion. We will never be able to ignore context again.

"The best kind of evangelism is where we learn from our past, our mistakes, and where people make of themselves open, inviting communities," he added.

Bishop Steven Plummer of Navajoland agreed with Kater's presentation about missionary efforts having been made in a colonial or imperial package.

"In the Navajo experience, missionaries came from the government," Plummer said. Those missionaries discouraged use of the Navajo language, ordered children to cut their hair, and tried to make them dress and look "like Anglos," he said.

"You have to be the victim of that kind of experience to understand," he noted. "We now wrestle with how to forgive those who harmed our ancestors. We have to forgive each other and move forward."

Many of the member dioceses of DMP have embraced the concept of total ministry, also known as mutual ministry or collaborative ministry in which the ministry of all the baptized is recognized and affirmed.

Kater praised the role of total ministry in "claiming the fact that the authority of the community belongs to the community. Ultimately, authority in the church is Christ's, and that is shared with the whole community."

Bishop Vernon Strickland of Western Kansas, president-elect of the DMP, said the meeting was helpful. "This meeting is lifeblood for us in Western Kansas. We have more in common with the people here than with any other group in the church."

He added that he felt invigorated by the meeting. "I am not interested in 'maintaining,'" he said. "I am interested in mission."

DMP member dioceses are Utah, Idaho, Eastern Oregon, Western Kansas, Navajoland, North Dakota, Alaska, Nevada, El Camino Real and Eau Claire.--**Dick Snyder**

2000-057D

Church addresses implications of Lambeth resolution on sexuality

(ENS) Dioceses of the Anglican Communion continue to address the implications of a resolution, passed at the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops, that declared homosexual activity "contrary to Scripture" and advised against the ordination of openly gay and lesbian clergy or the blessing of same-sex relationships.

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney in Australia passed a motion at its February meeting that asks the primates of the Anglican Communion at their meeting in Portugal to "take note of the recent consecrations of the Rt. Reverends John L. Rodgers and Chuck Murphy as an expression of the extreme frustration of orthodox and faithful Anglicans in ECUSA and in the worldwide Communion...."

The resolution affirmed the church's traditional theology on the "uniqueness of Jesus" and the "sufficiency and authority of Scripture," calling for a rejection of "heterosexual immorality and homosexual practice"

A special March 5 convention of the Diocese of Colorado, on the other hand, refused to curb its clergy who bless same-sex unions or call on the church to stop ordaining open gay and lesbian clergy. By a show of hands, delegates declined to endorse the resolutions passed by an overwhelming majority at Lambeth, leading some to warn that Episcopalians in this country were increasingly out of step with Anglicans in other parts of the world.

The special convention was scheduled at the end of a six-month study period during which congregations were urged to study the issues. The diocese postponed action on two resolutions endorsing the Lambeth position at its annual convention last October.

Other dioceses have also wrestled with the Lambeth issues:

- A Diocese of California task force concluded, "We find that living out the Gospel imperative to love God and one another precludes the rejection of homosexuality,

homosexuals or homosexual practices. We affirm God's call to include and accept all people as children of God."

- The Diocese of Minnesota cited the baptismal covenant and said that this is “a particularly appropriate time to include, welcome and embrace its gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members and explicitly declare that in our diocese we continue to make available to them all of the sacraments and blessings of God’s beloved church.”
- The Diocese of Maryland defeated a resolution that would have asked the church’s Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to provide a liturgical rite for blessing committed same-sex relationships.
- The Dioceses of South Carolina and Ft. Worth said that they “will be guided by the moral authority of the 1998 Lambeth Conference....”
- The Diocese of Los Angeles affirmed its policy and practice of not restricting membership or ordination “on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age.”-- **James Solheim**



news briefs

2000-058

The Diallo verdict raises larger issues of racism

(ENS) Following the February 25 not guilty verdict in the Amadou Diallo shooting, Bishop Richard Grein and Bishop Coadjutor Mark Sisk, both of the Diocese of New York, and clergy leaders called on the public to address the causes of the deteriorating relationship between the New York City Police Department and people of color.

Diallo is the man who was killed in the vestibule of his apartment building on February 8, 1999, by four New York City police officers who, believing that Diallo was a crime suspect, fired 41 times as he reached for his wallet. The police thought the wallet was a gun.

It's been nearly a year since Grein, Sisk, Suffragan Bishop Catherine Roskam, and Vicar Bishop E. Don Taylor led over 300 Episcopal demonstrators in protest of the killing to Police Plaza in Manhattan.

Grein said that the Diallo verdict confirmed the "crying necessity" for effective gun control. "The proliferation of handguns in our midst can only contribute to the fear among police officers that in pressing circumstances they must either kill or be killed," said Grein. "Until and unless we pass gun control legislation that directly addresses this dilemma, we will see no real change. Our constitutional right to bear arms needs to be a right disciplined and regulated by law."

He added that while "we must not underestimate the ingrained and obdurate racism" that fueled Diallo's death, it would be "an insult" to the people of color on the jury to say that their decision was based on racism.

"The fruits of racism, as well as its roots, are complex and entangled, reaching as they do to the very floor of human sin and ignorance," continued Grein. "For the redress of this sin and ignorance, we cannot look simply to our justice system, which is impotent to heal by its power alone. We must also look, each of us, to God and to our own souls, infected as those souls are with the fear and hatred that killed Amadou Diallo, as well as with the fear and hatred that insist that only the further destruction of life will redress his loss. This is the moral paralysis that infects the state of race relations in our city: that we are tempted to believe that only fear and hate can effectively combat fear and hate."

Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, responding to the verdict, said, "I find myself asking, again and again, if Amadou Diallo had been white would the shooting ever have occurred? Quite apart from the strict terms in which the verdict was arrived at is the larger and continuing question of racism."

Church leaders say no more bombing on Vieques

(ENI) Following a February 21 church-sponsored rally in San Juan, Puerto Rico, local church leaders decided to ask President Bill Clinton to remove a U.S. Navy base from the nearby island of Vieques.

Vieques is a small Puerto Rican island that the Navy has used for bombing practice and munitions storage for six decades. The church leaders believe that Clinton will ultimately make the decisions about what happens to the base, which is now the cause of deep and widespread anger. It was reported that at least 100,000 people from both Vieques and Puerto Rico marched in silence while waving white flags.

"The U.S. Navy has to abandon the island," said Bishop Alvaro Corrada del Rio, of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Caguas. "It was clearly demonstrated that the people of Vieques can count on tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans who are not going to abandon them."

Corrada del Rio was one of more than a dozen religious leaders who marched at the head of the demonstration carrying a giant banner stating "Peace for Vieques." Other participants included the Catholic Archbishop of San Juan, Roberto Gonzalez, and bishops and presidents of the Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, and several other Protestant and Evangelical churches.

The public protest was organized in response to a negotiated settlement between Puerto Rico's Governor Pedro Rossello and Clinton that in theory would allow the Navy to resume bombing this year. The settlement also allows the 9,000 inhabitants of Vieques to vote within the next few years on the navy's presence on the small island.

Carlos Romero Barcelo, Puerto Rico's non-voting representative in the U.S. Congress and a close ally of Rossello, called religious leaders "separatists." He said the march was "anti-American."

Church leaders gathered with Gonzalez on February 22 to evaluate the march and to decide when a meeting to discuss Vieques with Clinton should be requested.

New Bible translations help to preserve world's languages

(ENI) For the first time a New Testament has been published in the English-based Caribbean Creole language, which was once used by slaves.

According to Geoffrey Stamp, chief editor for the United Bible Societies (UBS), which published the Bible, it was created for the island of St Lucia.

"Creole used to be looked down on, so there is a tremendous reaction from people who feel that now their language has been accepted."

Stamp said the UBS's 1999 annual Scripture Language Report revealed that scripture became available in 21 more languages last year. The total number of languages in which the Bible is available in part or in its entirety now stands at 2,233. But this is still barely more than one third of the estimated 6,500 living languages in the world.

"There are empowerment issues in scripture becoming available in the language of the home," he said. "And throughout the developing world there is a move toward using the first language in elementary schools, with the national language being used later on in education."

Generation X clergy meet to discuss future

(ENS) The future of ministry to young adults looks more promising after a recent conference of Generation X clergy and lay leaders at the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest.

Thirty-five clergy, chaplains and lay professionals from throughout the country gathered at the seminary in late January for a four-day conference to explore issues related to their young adult ministries.

The Rev. Sean Cox, conference organizer, said the largely unchurched members of Generation X “were raised by Baby Boomers who rejected the institutional church. It’s a post-modern generation that was raised on ethical relativism and holds absolute truth as highly suspect.” He asked, “How do you proclaim the Gospel without changing it? How do you package it for Generation X?”

“Ministering more effectively to young adults is crucial to our church,” said the Rev. Durstan McDonald, dean of the seminary. “We were pleased to host such a conference that’s sure to enhance this vital mission field.”

Conference participants formed project teams that will explore the following ministry initiatives and report their findings when the group meets again at the seminary early next year:

- Work on better communication with computer-literate Generation X members through the use of technology and the Internet.
- Compile the “nuts and bolts on how to create projects for young adults.”
- Reflect on the years when Generation X members were growing up.

Commenting on the conference, Cox said, “I am encouraged that the Seminary of the Southwest is serious about mission and welcomed our gathering. A generation of leaders came together and began a conversation about our ministry. The relationships we formed will enable the church to grow and deepen.”

Presiding Bishop’s Fund helps Georgia and Africa

The Presiding Bishop’s Fund for World Relief (PBFWR) recently disbursed two emergency grants totaling \$50,000 to Camilla, Georgia, and Mozambique, Africa.

According to a report, when tornadoes ripped apart Camilla, killing 18 people and destroying homes and businesses, which resulted in \$25 million in damages, the PBFWR sent a total of \$25,000 in two installments to the Diocese of Georgia to help with clean-up efforts.

The Diocese of Lebombo, in Mozambique, received a \$25,000 emergency grant to assist it with relief efforts after a cyclone battered the coast. (See separate story.)

Winners of 1999 John Hines preaching award announced

(ENS) Virginia Theological Seminary recently announced the Rev. James Donald, rector at St. Columbia’s, Washington, D.C.; Todd Miller, music director at St. Paul’s Church, Ventura, California, and the Rev. Ramona Rose-Crossley, assistant missionary at Slate Valley Ministry of the Dioceses of Vermont and Albany are recipients of the first annual John Hines Preaching Award.

This honor is bestowed upon the outstanding preaching entry where prophetic voice is central within the sermon.

It was established in 1998 and is named after John Hines, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church and graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary. Hines, whose 12-years as presiding bishop covered most of the tumultuous 60s and early 70s, was known for his powerful preaching and commitment to social justice, particularly civil rights. The prophetic element that characterized Hines' own ministry demonstrated how Scripture and the theological tradition address Christians in their present social contexts and call for a faithful and costly response.

Raiser joins the global ethics dialogue at EDS

(ENS) Calling for a new "life-centered" global ethic, Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, challenged the Christian Church to lead the way by "reclaiming its moral foundation" in a January 13 lecture at Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

His lecture on "Ecclesiology and Ethics: The Church as a Moral Community," was part of a two-week course Raiser was teaching at EDS on the prospects and challenges the ecumenical movement faces in the 21st century, covering contemporary issues of religious and cultural plurality, interfaith dialogue, globalization and sustainable human community.

Raiser said the ethical challenges of today's world have brought about a "growing recognition of the need to go beyond resistance to develop an alternative culture marked by dialogue, cooperation, nonviolence and truthfulness."

Environmental crisis and world violence are the "most urgent expressions of the need for ethical dialogue," he said, and the challenge of building a sustainable international order is "one of the strongest inspirations for religious dialogue in this age."

Raiser said the movement for unity among churches is "more necessary than ever." And that the church is a "microcosm which reflects that larger [world] household in which the continued dialogue can take place."

New archbishop for Westminster announced

(ENS) Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor was named the new Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster on February 15.

Murphy-O'Connor, currently bishop of Arundel and Brighton, will fill the position left vacant since the June 1999 death of Cardinal Basil Hume.

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said, "I am delighted to learn of the appointment of Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor. I have known [him] well and regard [him] with great esteem."

"The Anglican Communion has a true friend in the new Archbishop," said Canon David Hamid, director of Ecumenical Affairs for the Anglican Communion Office. "Throughout the years he served as the Roman Catholic co-chairman of ARCIC, Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor has come to know and understand us at a very deep level and he will bring to his new office a lively commitment to the search for full ecclesial unity."

If the Queen has her say, Carey won't retire at 65

(ENS) Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey will turn 65 years old in November and has hinted in the past of retirement at that time. Nonetheless, a recent report speculates that the Queen may try to change his mind.

The date under discussion is 2003 when the Queen will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of her ascent to the throne. She has made it clear to insiders that she does not want too imposing a celebration, but there is expected to be at least one big church service. The Queen has said she admires Carey's honesty, faith and steadfastness under attack, according to reports.

If Carey decides to stay many people in the church would be surprised since in November, 1997, he said he found his job too demanding. "I get very tired. I feel fine now, but there is no doubt that in five years' time I would be ready to hand over to somebody else," he said.

Legally Carey is entitled to remain archbishop until 2005 when he turns 70 years old.

New archbishop in Melbourne calls for tolerance of gays

(ENS) Bishop Peter Watson, the newly elected archbishop of Melbourne, has begun his tenure with a call for greater tolerance towards homosexuals.

Watson, currently bishop of South Sydney, said he is committed to making the church more relevant to contemporary society.

His comments, in which he said gay men deserved "dignity and respect" surprised many because just two years ago, he supported a resolution against the ordination of practicing homosexuals.

Watson's remarks were made after an attack by Cardinal Edward Clancy, archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and the Rev. Harry Goodhew, Anglican archbishop of Sydney, who advised Sydney residents to avoid the March 4 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade, saying it was a highly erotic and gross way of promoting a homosexual lifestyle.

Watson said the parade was part of Sydney life, although he did warn that any event "glamorizing sexual promiscuity" was a cause of concern for religious leaders.

"The church has ordained people of homosexual orientation for generations, some of them our best priests," he said.

Watson will be officially installed in mid-May replacing Bishop Keith Rayner.

Prince Charles of Wales backs the Book of Common Prayer

(ENS) Prince Charles of Wales has emphasized his support for the traditional Anglican liturgy by agreeing to become patron of the Prayer Book Society, which supports the Book of Common Prayer.

Anthony Klimister, chairman of the Prayer Book Society, said, "The prince's decision to grant his patronage to the society is a great encouragement to those who care about the continuity and who understand that the prayer book is a stable point of reference in a changing world."

In 1980, the Church of England published the *Alternative Service Book*, which will be replaced this year by a new book of prayer entitled *Common Worship*. Prince Charles is also supportive of this effort, saying, "*Common Worship*, as its title implies, is designed to draw the worshipping traditions in the Church of England together."



news features

2000-059

Bishops' spouses build houses, and relationships, in Honduras

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) They shoveled sand and heaved cinderblocks. They talked with families still recovering more than a year after a storm's devastation. They visited a clothing factory and heard about abusive conditions in other, similar places where thousands work hard to earn a paltry wage. And they made time to meet and play games with their young hosts, the girls who live in Our Little Roses Home for Girls in San Pedro Sula, seat of the Diocese of Honduras.

In all, 21 spouses of Episcopal Church bishops spent a tightly scheduled week in Honduras last February seeing not only the work of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, which has been active there since the country was overwhelmed by Hurricane Mitch in October, 1998, but a bit of the country as well.

"Initially I thought we were going there just to help build houses" in the 95-home community rising under the fund's sponsorship outside San Pedro Sula, said Kate Smith, wife of Bishop Andrew Smith of Connecticut. "We ended up being immersed in Honduran culture."

The group arrived on February 5 ready to work. After Sunday worship at the cathedral and a meeting to learn about the fund's housing project, called "Faith, Hope and Joy," the spouses began the next day at the work site. They would spend a total of four mornings in their weeklong stay helping to move piles of sand, smoothing the dirt inside freshly built houses so that cement floors could be poured, forming a chain to move cinderblocks, and gathering pieces of wood left around the site by the busy construction crews.

'We made friends'

"We worked beside Hondurans of all ages," said Betty Creighton, wife of Michael Creighton, bishop of Central Pennsylvania. "We met and talked with the families that would occupy the homes, and we heard devastating stories of their suffering during and after Hurricane Mitch. We spoke in halting Spanish, and we made friends." A number of spouses noted that they were far from the first in their dioceses to volunteer at the work site, and that many, especially members of Episcopal Church Women, had enthusiastically raised money

for the project. Clergy spouses in the Diocese of West Texas underwrote the cost of two houses.

Since the project's ground-breaking last June, more than 40 houses have been built and about 10 families have moved in. Plans are being made now for finishing the water system and installing sewerage. Volunteers from throughout the Episcopal Church have continued to flock to the building site, according to a supervisor, who noted that a total of 112 had arranged to come during February.

Each afternoon, after showers and a pause for lunch, the spouses made short trips to a variety of sites to learn more about the country.

One visit was to a *maquila*, a huge factory where pieces of cloth are assembled into ready-to-wear clothing sold by U.S. chains such as the Gap, J.C. Penney, Walmart and Old Navy. The *maquilas* pay very little, but many clamor for the work in a country where the unemployment rate soars. Workers, who start at a wage of \$4 per day (with subsidies for meals and bus fare), average about 25 years old, according to Kate Smith.

The spouses heard from several women who had worked in these factories, and from Anna Reyes de Monje, a graduate of Our Little Roses who currently serves as a monitor of four *maquilas* that do work for the Gap, the only company that has such monitors. The Diocese of Honduras pays her salary, she explained.

Using her experience from four months of work in a *maquila*, where she saw abuses including forced unpaid overtime, ever-changing rules and frequent shifts in job assignments, and a constant threat of being fired, she inspects factories, reports problems to the Gap. If the problems are not fixed in a reasonable amount of time the Gap may move its operations to another *maquila*.

Our Little Roses

In another session, the spouses learned the history of Our Little Roses, the home founded by Diana Frade, whose husband, Leo, is bishop of Honduras. Begun in 1985 with a resolution at the diocesan convention, the home now has 50 girls, from babies through teenagers. All the children were at risk of abuse, have no relatives who can care for them and are from very poor families.

The home provides good schooling, medical care, and the support of a warm, church-related community, Frade said. The visitors, some of whom had brought games and other activities to the youngsters, joined with them to play, heard the girls sing, and came away impressed by the kids. The meeting left more than one spouse ready to find more sponsors, or simply pen-pals, for the youngsters.

At other times, the spouses viewed Mayan ruins and visited an inner-city congregation whose women are active in supporting the church's work. The local group of ECW has raised money for a number of projects and maintains a flourishing outreach program to elderly in the parish.

Smith, who is putting together a slide show to share with churches in her diocese, said she hopes to raise some funds to help pay for houses in the "Faith, Hope and Joy" project. "If we can collect and designate money for more houses," she said, "it will free the Presiding Bishop's Fund to allocate other money for the sewer system, which will cost about \$500,000."

Becky Parsley, wife of Bishop Henry Parsley of Alabama, called the trip "in many ways a life-changing journey." In an article she wrote for *The Alabama Apostle*, the diocesan newspaper, she described some of the people she had met at the housing site. "After less than a week of work I felt physically exhausted and at the same time amazed and inspired by their energy and enthusiasm."

She said she had been moved to see what the Episcopal Church was doing for people in Honduras.

Griswold pronounced the trip a success. "I found these women to be so flexible, and very savvy," she said. "They have seen a lot about the church, good and not so good, but they have a wisdom that stops short of cynicism." She said that she hoped that, together, the spouses could realize and harness the creative energy that often is seen only within their own dioceses.

Griswold added that because the February trip had been booked so quickly, another spouse visit is planned for next October.

Joining Smith, Creighton and Parsley in the group were Jane Sigloh, chaplain of the group, plus the wives of 15 current or retired bishops. They included: Hyde Tennis of the Diocese of Delaware, Ira Leidel of Eastern Michigan, Nancy Persell of Chicago, Sheila Ohl of Northwest Texas, Louise Shipp of Georgia, Nancy Hibbs of West Texas, Elizabeth Allan of Atlanta, Hazel Kelshaw of Rio Grande, Carol Garrison of Western New York, Martha Murphy-Cole of Central New York, Elizabeth Hart of Southern Virginia, Mary Kelsey of Northern Michigan, Linda Rockwell of Missouri, Ann Vest of Virginia, Suzanne Whitmore of Eau Claire, and Phoebe Griswold, wife of Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

2000-060

Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes quietly celebrates 15th anniversary

by James Solheim

(ENS) The Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes gathered in the shadow of San Francisco's Grace Cathedral to celebrate its 15th anniversary with very little fanfare—but a growing sense of the important role these churches play in the church.

At the core of the annual conference was a series of plenary presentations by the Rev. Herbert O'Driscoll, Irish-born but a teacher and writer in the Anglican Church of Canada for most of his career. The addresses were interwoven around a series of workshops on a wide range of practical and theological issues.

In three lectures that were well received by the 450 participants, O'Driscoll described a changing world and the challenges the church faces in a new age. In the last 30 years, the earth has moved from modernity to a post-modern age, marked by an awareness that the institutional structures of western society are losing their ability to serve us, he contended.

Among the assumptions that have been displaced are the rational management of human affairs, improvement in our quality of life through life sciences, the capacity of reason to discern and solve problems and inevitable progress. Post-modernity is marked by life lived in the present tense, the celebration of relativism and pluralism, the supremacy of individualism, reality as a shifting continuous process, and a deep suspicion that all sources of authority are suspect, alienating and repressive.

As a consequence, O'Driscoll said, we are caught in a vast, homogenizing force that uses media and the market. Secular culture pushes aside religious structures, isolating them to

the private sphere. "The marriage of faith and culture is coming apart," he said. And the post-modern age denies that there is any "meta-narrative" that holds everything together, whether it is nationalism or religion.

That puts religion on a collision course since "we base everything on the meta-narrative of the Bible," he added. But instead of adopting a defensive posture in this new age, or taking refuge in Scripture, O'Driscoll urges churches to "be faithful to the story, looking at past performance, but write a new chapter that is faithful and consistent but also innovative." And the glory of the Christian meta-narrative is that it isn't based on power but servanthood.

Looking into the future

O'Driscoll pointed to the resilience of religion in Western society, defying predictions that it would fade. "Our vocation at the beginning of the 21st century is to find what will be the viable forms of Christian life in this century," he said. While none of us can predict the future, he said that a few things seem apparent. "The Christian faith, for the first time in a thousand years in the West, is changing from being the faith of a culture to being a faith in a multi-culture," he said.

As a consequence, "my generation is the last in western Christianity that came to faith primarily by institutional inheritance. From now on, my children and grandchildren, will come to it by personal choice." But, he quickly added, "Faith that is personally chosen is intensely and emotionally held—it becomes an evangelical faith."

Until the middle of the last century, most people had a rather clear idea of what it meant to be a Christian, according to O'Driscoll. In a new and changing culture we are going from a question of how we know more about God to a question of how we experience God. "We are in the process of recovering all sorts of lost Christian spiritualities," he said. As we move into the unknown, "we need the companions of the past," those who have gone through similar times of transition and change, to see how they adapted and survived, to see what they can teach us.

He offered several hopeful signs, including an exciting new conversation between theology and creation spirituality, an explosion of small groups within congregations, an explosion of hymnody and Bible study, the symbolism of women at altars and all that implies—and a resurgent fascination of interest in the person of Jesus.

Incredible resources

"You have at your command incredible resources," Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold told participants in the conference at a luncheon. O'Driscoll was even more pointed when he talked about the kind of power represented by the economic power of all the endowments represented in the plenary session. "Nowhere else in the Anglican Communion, perhaps nowhere else in the Christian world, could you gather a number of people such as this to represent as powerful a set of resources."

Dean Charles Kiblinger of St. John's Cathedral in Denver, president of the consortium, said that the consortium began with conversations among some heavily endowed parishes like Trinity Church in New York who began asking about responsibilities and opportunities for those with considerable resources.

"The organization has evolved so that it focuses not only on managing endowments and using them responsibly but also leadership training for lay and clergy," he said. "It has always stressed leadership. The presidency of the consortium for example alternates between lay and clergy and the balance on the board is very healthy."

Kiblinger says that no one has estimated the total endowment represented by consortium's 78 members but admits it would run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

And he said that a survey meant to identify potential members, parishes with over a million dollars in endowment, discovered that there are about 700 churches that meet the criteria.

The consortium is more a network than an organization. "We became a network because of strong similarities with each other, finding ways to pool common knowledge and resources as a way of doing ministry with excellence," he said. The board is working on a visioning process and strategic planning that takes into account growing membership and staff. It also hopes to sponsor more regional and local workshops on common issues, he said.

Workshops address wide range of interests

A wide range of workshops addressed interests of the participants, both practical and more theological. Several dealt with stewardship in congregations, but also how to make grants and deal with planned giving, as well as mission-based investing. Others deal with issues such as globalization and human development, AIDS ministry, sexuality, inclusive leadership, models of community ministry, diversity and multiculturalism, volunteerism, and the role of the Anglican Communion.

The Rev. John Peterson, a member of the Episcopal Church who is secretary general of the Anglican Communion, spoke to a packed workshop on the challenges and opportunities the communion faces. (The theme of the conference was "The Anglican Communion: New Visions for a Global Church.")

Almost all 600 of the dioceses in the communion have been touched by the "tremendous generosity of the Episcopal Church," as represented by the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, the United Thank offering and the Episcopal Church Women. "We belong to an enormously diverse family," he said as he launched into a breathless tour of the variety of churches and cultures represented among the communion's 70 million members in 38 different provinces in 164 countries around the world.

When asked about the recent consecration of two Americans in Singapore as "missionary bishops" for the American church, Peterson said that the church in Rwanda, whose archbishop was one of the consecrators, adopted a constitution about a year ago that stipulates that bishops are consecrated only to dioceses. And the Province of South East Asia, whose primate was also a consecrator, also stipulates that its bishops are called to specific dioceses. He said that the archbishop of Canterbury would therefore not recognize the consecrations.

Listening and learning from each other

Griswold was also asked about the Singapore consecrations during the luncheon. He drew parallels to "somewhat similar phenomenons" in recent history that resulted in schisms. "Another schism has been created," he said. And he reminded participants that Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey has made it clear that "provinces cannot be created within other provinces."

He reported that, during a conversation at a monastery in the Hudson River Valley over issues of sexuality, several African bishops pleaded, "Please do not abandon us, no matter what we say about you." He said that they acknowledged that "the issues you face are ones we know we must face." Griswold said that it was clear that they were looking for a relationship that went "beyond the transfer of money."

"One of our tasks is to enter into a much more deliberate relationship with other provinces of the Anglican Communion so that our experiences can interact at a level of deeper exchange, so that we can discover together what it means to be a communion," he said.

Griswold encouraged consortium members to develop relationships of “authentic mutuality that involves listening and learning.” That should include asking others, “Where is Jesus for you,” and then listening to their responses.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

2000-061

New York church reopens its slave gallery to stand as a lesson in pain—and hope

by Judith Milone

(ENS) Imagine waking up on Sunday morning knowing you'll be in church in a few hours. But instead of leisurely pouring a second cup of coffee or glancing at the Sunday paper, you must wait and watch attentively, ready to answer your owner's every beck and call. And instead of walking or taking the bus to church, you row your master and his family in a boat across the roiling East River from Brooklyn to lower Manhattan.

Once at church, the family walks to its pew on the main floor. You climb a steep, narrow staircase and spend the time during the service standing with others in a “gallery,” a small, dark, grim room behind the church's balcony.

You are a slave, a person of African descent in legal bondage to a white man. The place is New York City. The church, St. Augustine's, is Episcopal.

Not only did slavery exist until it was for the most part ended in 1827 in New York State, the average slaveholder in New York owned more slaves than his counterparts in any state north of Virginia. Even after the legal abolition of slavery in New York, some cases of slavery, as well as deep-rooted racism and legislated segregation, persisted.

On February 26, in a world very different from that of 1827, church members, historians and conservationists gathered at the church to memorialize the gallery and launch its restoration and reopening, this time to serve as a reminder of a shameful part of the country's—and the church's—history.

The moving ceremony, punctuated by African drums and a performance by St. Augustine's Liturgical Choir, also inaugurated the Lower East Side Community Preservation Program, of which the gallery is a part.

“We always knew it was there,” states the Rev. Errol A. Harvey, rector of St. Augustine's, a vibrant congregation of 150 that meets in the attractive, colonial-style church built in the mid-1820s.

The congregation, once all white, is now predominantly black, and proud of its African-American heritage. The handsome sanctuary has an altar bearing a kinte cloth frontal and there are prominently placed portraits of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Silent testimony

Harvey described the slave gallery—two small, unventilated rooms located in the rear of the church, above the nave's balcony, as a “testimony of good people colluding with a monstrous evil.” In times past, even though the congregation knew that the rooms had been built for a horrific use, there was no urge to acknowledging the slave gallery, he said. Only in the aftermath of the enormous social and political changes in our country since the civil

rights movement, and in today's openness about claiming history and remembering evils, did St. Augustine's form a committee, just over a year ago.

The slave gallery committee led the way in making the story known, having the area memorialized, and beginning scholarly research to answer the many questions about the gallery's use and the life of African-Americans in the early part of the 19th century in New York City.

Joining in that work is the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, a bustling organization that preserves and presents the history of that section of Manhattan. In an address during the February program, Ruth Abram, founder of the museum and its current president, said, "We have gathered and resolved to convert the slave gallery from its original intent as an instrument of separation and degradation to a symbol of our refusal to participate by action or even by silence in the establishment or maintenance of policies or customs of separation."

The museum is collaborating with the parish in restoring the gallery for public view and has raised funds to establish the Lower East Side Community Preservation Program to help. To begin its work, the project has already put out a call for artifacts related to the history of slavery and the post-Colonial era on the Lower East Side. Other work will have to be done to prepare the space for visits by groups and produce materials to help explain the history. Harvey said he hoped the space would be ready by the end of this year.

While there are gaps in history, colorful and perhaps apocryphal stories have been kept alive by oral tradition at St. Augustine's. Edgar Allen Poe allegedly sat in the back of St. Augustine's and meditated. The infamous Boss Tweed—the rogue of 19th century New York politics—reportedly hid in the gallery itself during his mother's funeral. A fugitive at the time, Tweed made a quick escape after the funeral, the slave gallery having successfully kept him from the arm of the law.

Many questions

To confirm the history of the gallery the project has important research to undertake. The only other extant known slave gallery is in Old South Church, Boston. Are there others? Why does St. Augustine's building have a gallery while other Episcopal churches built at the same time or before do not? Could slaves worship in any way while they were held there? Were slaves baptized? Were they in shackles? Was there any connection between St. Augustine's gallery and the underground railroad, which is known to have used another house of worship in the area? The need for objective answers is real.

One of the February 26 speakers for whom the day had special meaning was A. J. Williams Myers, now professor of black studies at the State University of New York campus at New Paltz. Myers spent some of his youth in the parish, where his father was vicar in the 1950s. Discussing the gallery, he said, "We all knew about it but weren't able to deal with it." Now with his vast knowledge of history of slavery, Myers declared, "The gallery's story must be told so that we can begin the process of healing and so that those who come after us will make a better world."

For information about the slave gallery or the Lower East Side Community Preservation Project, contact Liz Sevchenko, project director of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, 66 Allen Street, New York, NY 10002, phone (212) 431-0233, X230, or check the museum's website, www.tenement.org. You can also write to Edgar W. Hopper, on-site coordinator, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 333 Madison Street, New York, NY 10002.

--Judith Milone is a correspondent for *The Episcopal New Yorker*, the newspaper of the Diocese of New York, for which this article was written.

2000-062

Stewardship leaders share ideas at Florida conference

by Mary W. Cox

"We are inventing some good wheels around the Church," says Terry Parsons, national staff officer for stewardship. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we hitch them to some axles and actually go somewhere!"

At the third "Inventing the Wheel" conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, January 21-23, approximately 90 stewardship leaders from more than 20 dioceses had an opportunity to share their visions of how to do just that.

Imagine a stewardship event that began each day with 45 minutes of intensive Bible study, and had more to say about mission than money.

"The [only] reason we talk about money," says Parsons, "is because money is where we confront the culture."

"This is a family event," Parsons told the group gathered on the morning of January 21, explaining that some of those attending had been together at previous conferences, most came with teams from their home dioceses or congregations, and all would become a community during the conference. "You can't sell soap if you don't take baths," she said, reminding laughing participants that involvement in a vibrant, loving Christian community is what the church "sells."

Community-building began with Bible study, following a format called "Gospel-based Discipleship" introduced by the Rev. John Robertson of the Episcopal Church's Office of Native-American Ministries.

After 45 minutes of "engaging the Gospel," small groups—many of them teams from a diocese or parish—focused on defining and describing the church's mission.

Using a process designed by the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, the groups worked toward developing specific plans for stewardship at both parish and diocesan levels. Participating dioceses and congregations had been urged to send groups of three or four persons, in order to have a leadership team to implement the plans they would bring home.

After defining a mission statement and reviewing challenges and opportunities for carrying out their mission, each group moved on to identifying mission goals and specific plans for achieving them.

One parish group set the goal of adding 20 new members to the congregation in the next 18 months. Another group's goals were "to make stewardship popular," and to increase parish growth and outreach.

"What struck me," says Tom Fleming, stewardship chair for the Diocese of Southeast Florida, "is that in a right relationship with God, our plan for our parish or diocese is God's plan. If we'll just ask God to share it with us, and then listen for God's response, God will tell us where to focus our ministries—and make sure we have the resources to carry them out!"

Ted Mollegen, past chair of the national Standing Committee on Stewardship and Development, commented, "This felt like an evangelism conference."

Parsons replied, "No—this was a discipleship conference."

--Mary W. Cox is acting communications coordinator for the Diocese of Southeast Florida.

Photographs included in this issue of ENS:

1. Shovels at rest, a visiting group of bishops' wives smiles for the camera (2000-059)
2. A bishop's wife digs in to build a house in Honduras (2000-059)
3. Praise the Lord and pass... the cement (2000-059)
4. Consortium of Endowed Parishes celebrates 15th anniversary (2000-060)
5. Consortium of Endowed Parishes celebrates 15th anniversary (2000-060)
6. African-American heritage is apparent in St. Augustine's Church in New York City (2000-061)
7. Steep stairs mark entrance to slave gallery (2000-061)
8. Slave gallery fills back wall of balcony in New York City church (2000-061)
9. A Lutheran service in an Episcopalian space (2000-054)

(All photos are available in color)

The Episcopal News Service is available electronically. QUEST users can join the "Episcopal News Service" meeting to receive full versions of all stories. Web users can visit the official Episcopal Church web site at **www.ecusa.anglican.org/ens**

